



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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December 21, 2007

NEW MEXICO BULLETIN NO. 360-7-03

SUBJECT: PER – NRCS EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

TO: All Employees

Purpose. To inform all employees.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2007.

An Earth Team Database Program has been developed to help manage and monitor the NRCS national volunteer program. Cooperation and effort are needed from all NRCS employees who recruit and supervise volunteers to keep this database accurate and effective. All volunteers must be entered into this system.

Therefore, all NRCS employees in New Mexico who supervise volunteers are requested to submit form NRCS-PER-001 (Earth Team Volunteer Application) for volunteers they recruit and supervise, to their respective Area Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators on a monthly basis. Form NRCS-PER-004 (Timesheet) should also be submitted to Area Earth Team Volunteer Coordinators on a monthly schedule with the day(s) and number of hours worked along with the clock hours outlined.

Earth Team applications and timekeeping forms are available from the State/Area Coordinators or can be downloaded direct at <http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov> under Title 360 Part 428 Subpart J Exhibits. Please review the attached needs assessment and return with your comments by January 19, 2007. Questions regarding this information or other Earth Team Program topics can be directed to:

- Cindy Nycz, State Volunteer Coordinator at (505) 761-4420
- Doreen Padilla, Northwest Area Coordinator at (505) 341-0074
- Elaine Padilla, Southwest Area Coordinator at (505) 838-4259
- Deborah Scott, Southeast Area Coordinator at (505) 648-4293
- Ramona Brooks, East Area Coordinator at (505) 762-4769

DENNIS ALEXANDER  
State Conservationist

Attachment

The following are some clarification:

**Bulletin 120-4-02 - issued on January 5, 2004 was incorrect.** It stated that Farm Bill Employees were to be signed up as Earth Team Volunteers to operate a Government owned or leased vehicle. Farm Bill Employees are covered to operate a Government owned or leased vehicle through an MOU with the district. **THEY ARE NOT TO BE SIGNED UP AS VOLUNTEERS.** Policy clearly states that other Federal, State, or local government employees, Resource Conservation and Development board members, and conservation district officials may serve as volunteers. However, their activities must always be clearly voluntary and beyond the scope of what they were hired, elected, or appointed to do.

**Hosted Volunteers:** GM-360-428.25 Hosted volunteers may serve as Earth Team volunteers. A hosted volunteer is defined as any volunteer who receives pay from a source other than NRCS. Examples of this type of service include, but are not limited to: Green Thumb, welfare-to-work type of programs, and job training programs.

**Family Members or other relatives of NRCS employees serving as volunteers:** GM-360-428.23 Family members or other relatives of NRCS employees are eligible to serve as volunteer. Good judgment and discretion should be used when placing these individuals to avoid a conflict of interest or perception of a conflict of interest. Also, always remember that in case of close friends, family and partners, activities must always be clearly voluntary and not to be used as a method of legitimization for government vehicles.

Earth Team activities are limited to those functions NRCS would normally perform. If a regular employee would not get paid for doing the task, it cannot count as an Earth Team activity. Or when dealing with a group, the group leader(s) are the only ones who sign-up as Earth Team volunteers, even though the time of all participants is counted. Addition information on policy concerning the Earth Team Volunteer Program can be found in the General Manual under File Code 360 Part 428. Policy is located on the national website at: <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### Field Office

1. Computer help
2. Organizing maps and area photos
3. Update manuals for FO
4. Wash vehicles
5. Files status reviews and update spreadsheet
6. Brush and rock dams
7. Planting trees
8. Update cooperator files by entering client resource information from case files, update farm plans and client notes into computer.
9. Follow up contact with cooperators by phone or mail
10. Extracts reports from computer or client database as requested
11. Assist with clerical work and typing correspondence, forms, and worksheets.
12. Assist with the administrative duties in the office
13. Act as receptionist. By answering telephone (screen calls and refer calls to proper person).
14. Assist the public with questions, requests, and direction; assist the staff with outgoing calls as well as setting up conference calls.
15. Assist with the filing of correspondence, forms, soil interpretation sheets, various engineering needs, directives, manuals, and handbooks.
16. Photocopying and assembly.
17. Assist with incoming and outgoing mail.
18. Develop conservation education lessons or use established lessons, videos, slides, etc.
19. Contact schools, clubs, and/or organizations and sell them the program.
20. Present conservation education materials to schools.
21. Coordinate establishment of an outdoor classroom at the local elementary school. Recruit, organize, and supervise volunteers to implement conservation plan. Work with volunteers to develop appropriate lesson plans and teachers' guide for use of the outdoor classroom.
22. Photograph examples of: soil and water erosion, of successful conservation practices, and conservation education activities.
23. Develop and implement a public information program promoting the uses of soil surveys and benefits of managing their natural resources.
24. Organize and manage county fair display.
25. Make presentations to interested groups.
26. Contact county landowners, real estate agents, bankers, and other interested parties to explain soil surveys.
27. Develop locally collected data into news articles for publication by local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations to keep the public informed about conservation and resource programs in the county.
28. Meeting with or phoning the district conservationist once a week to check on current conservation activities and needs.
29. Assist with locating, stocking, and organizing timely materials for bulletin board and brochure rack.
30. Periodically call on county board members, township officials, key city and county department heads to establish and maintain a liaison with them. (RC&D)
31. Assist the field office staff with applying ecological conservation planning and application in the field and office.
32. Transferring soil map units from soil survey mapping sheets to land use aerial photos. (Soil scientist)
33. Gather crop data for Swamp buster and Sodbuster determination. (Agronomy)
34. Assist the field office in survey, design and drafting of engineering practices for cooperators.
35. Make field survey, reference and plot field notes.
36. Help design Ag waste system.
37. Help the NRCS staff with the construction of conservation practices in the field as a rodman.
38. Assemble in plan folder soils maps, aerial photos, biology information sheets, soils data, seeding plans, job sheets and narrative record of cooperators decisions.
39. Distribute information on soil surveys.
40. Collect crop yield data on various erosion phases of soils.
41. Collect and weigh samples, and obtain crop moisture content from fields.
42. Provide assistance in simple surveying, layout and engineering design work for approved conservation practices as outlined in the NRCS Technical Guides.
43. Identify problem areas, wetlands, weed problems, erosion problems.
44. Schedule an NRCS or SWCD employee to visit if maintenance is needed.
45. Assist in data collection including erosion inventories, field evaluations, water quality samples, and well monitoring water table levels for pre-selected sites at set intervals.
46. Map compilation, including color checking soils maps, counting acres, and checking line/symbol accuracy.
47. Assist with manuscript development, including typing/word-processing assistance for current descriptions/legends.

48. Assist soil mappers in collecting soil data, crop yield, woodland site index, permeability studies, etc.
49. Contact landowners/operators to promote soil survey process and/or gain permission/access to land.
50. Responsible for assisting and/or gathering soil data in field - assist in excavation of soil pits, field examination of soil profiles, and collection of soil samples. Record soils information on forms.
51. Assist in tabulation and compilation of field data - Record acreage of mapping units, map compilation (color check), field note compilation, farm plan mapping transfer and update, prepare field sheets for mapping (section tics, outline and name lakes, etc.).
52. Assist and/or gather crop yield and woodland data - measure and record information, make preparations for field work (gather necessary equipment, maps, tools, field sheets).
53. Maintain field equipment.
54. Assist in collecting, organizing, and culling duplicate soil data collected in progressive soil surveys.
55. Collect soil data files for completed soil surveys. Organize soil data according to filing system in General Manual. Remove duplicate and/or irrelevant soil data from the files.
56. Assist clients with planting information, species selection, windbreak planning and wildlife enhancement of planting trees.
57. Help contact landowners interested in trees. Help in measurement and planning of farmstead groves, field windbreaks, and wildlife tree planting.
58. Take appropriate number of water samples from each lake. Test for nitrates and phosphorous by chemical analysis.

#### **District or RC&D**

1. Design and construct a booth to meet district annual plan goals and objectives.
2. Staff booth at fairs, shopping malls, schools, and miscellaneous community activities.
3. Set up and maintain booth, information and displays in a neat and orderly condition.
4. Help disassemble booth at termination of display.
5. Assemble a "scrapbook" of newspaper articles dealing with conservation activities.
6. Take photographs of erosion, conservation, wildlife, water quality and assemble a slide presentation to show conservation efforts in county.

#### **State Office**

1. Web site for broken links
2. Assist in developing main theme for conservation newsletter by writing and publishing feature news articles for local papers and collection of articles prior to newsletter assembly plan newsletter layout and design with supervision.
3. Responsible for printing and mailing. Seeks out potential sponsors and updates mailing list.
4. Set up photo system from established guidelines. Develop filing system, correlate and organize photos and slides.
5. Prepare and develop slide sets that increase public awareness of natural resource conservation benefits and issues.
6. Write a narrative and gather slides, taking necessary photos.
7. Graphic design as it relates to publications and exhibits
8. Development of slide and videotape presentations and development of presentation delivery styles and techniques, including the use of video projector, overhead projector, slide and videotape programs, flip charts, room arrangements, etc.
9. Develop and maintain a public information program for the field office, promoting conservation, including newspaper articles and/or a column, weekly radio talk show, or public service announcements.
10. Design and construct a booth to meet district annual plan goals and objectives.
11. Staff booth at fairs, shopping malls, schools, and miscellaneous community activities.
12. Set up and maintain booth, information and displays in a neat and orderly condition.
13. Help disassemble booth at termination of display.
14. Assemble a "scrapbook" of newspaper articles dealing with conservation activities.
15. Take photographs of erosion, conservation, wildlife, water quality and assemble a slide presentation to show conservation efforts in county.
16. Computer help
17. Photocopying and assembly
18. Update manuals